

Travellers warn of 'violent resistance'

By JON AUSTIN

jon.austin@nqe.com

A TRAVELLER activist has warned of a "very brutal confrontation" if a mass eviction takes place at the illegal Dale Farm camp, in Crays Hill.

Plans are already in the pipeline to defend the site, near Billericay, with barbed wire, iron gates and scaffolding.

Meanwhile, the estimated 400 travellers who live illegally at the site, hope to appeal against eviction at the House of Lords.

Basildon Council believes the eviction will take more than a week and involve up to 400 police officers and teams of bailiffs. Road blocks would be set up throughout the area.

Campaigner Grattan Puxon said trouble was likely because of the "violence" used by bailiffs, armed with heavy machinery, at previous evictions.

He believes they would cause a reaction from men not prepared to see their families threatened.

He said: "The women here are very much in shock and in tears. The men are deter-

☐ Woman are in shock and tears
☐ Men determined to protect the site

mined to protect Dale Farm, physically, if necessary.

"Forced eviction could result in a very brutal confrontation.

"Dale Farm will be establishing its own defences, using several kilometres of barbed wire, scaffolding and iron gates".

Mr Puxon has been involved in fighting evictions at a number of illegal sites across the UK where there has been violence.

A man from bailiff firm Constant & Co was left unable to work again after having his kneecaps smashed at the Meadowlands site, Little Waltham, near Chelmsford, in 2004.

However, Mr Puxon ruled out the return of a gas canister barricade set up in 2005. It was dismantled two years later following local opposition and advice from the fire service.

He added: "We do not want to do anything that would jeopardise safety on the site."

Hopes for co-operation

BASILDON Council leader Malcolm Buckley is asking the council to liaise with the communities at Dale Farm and Hovefields to see if they could agree a non-forced clearance.

He said: "We will be putting on the table the fact there are four legal plots still

available at Meadow Lane, Wickford. Some time ago there were spaces on sites in Colchester and Harlow. These may be options for some families."

The council will now serve orders giving travellers 28 days to leave before bailiffs can be sent in unannounced.

**FREE
Cosmetic
Surgery
Open
Evening**

new year
new you

Find out how to achieve your new look at our **Cosmetic Surgery Open Evenings**. Our expert Consultant Cosmetic Surgeons offer a range of procedures.

Hear about the wide range of procedures our fully qualified surgeons can offer, ask them questions and talk to them informally



Spire

Wellesley Hospital

Monday 2nd February 7pm

To book your free place, or for further information call

01702 447 926

www.spirehealthcare.com/wellesley

Eastern Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 4XH